

Section 26, The Heart of Shri Shankara

HOSS: So it is clear that the existence of (a quasi metaphysical cosmic power or force of) positive Ignorance cannot be established for the waking state. All the less can it be proved for dreamless sleep. No such positive Ignorance has ever been experienced in dreamless sleep or ever could be.

Answer: avidyA is stated to be the shakti by BrihadAraNyak BhAshya VArtika in 4.3.1784 - आत्माविद्यैव नः शक्तिः सर्वशक्यस्य सज्जने । नातोऽन्यथा शक्तिवादः प्रमाणेनावसीयते ॥ The avidyA of Atman is Shakti for us (in our view) in the creation of everything. No other shakti-vAda other than this is determined by pramANa. This shakti is called bhAvarUpA (erroneously translated as positive so as to connote some sort of existence) only to indicate its difference from abhAva like horns of hare and not to posit existence. This shakti is as non-existent as the horns of hare. The only difference is that it appears to exist whereas horns of hare do not even appear to exist. The usage of the word 'positive' by HOSS is therefore a thoroughly incorrect description of our view.

Further, this avidyA is the material cause of this magical duality as stated in VArtika 1.4.371 - अस्य द्वैतेन्द्रजालस्य यदुपादानकारणम्। अज्ञानं तदुपाश्रित्य ब्रह्मकारणमुच्यते॥ (The material cause of this magical duality is ajnAna. Brahman is said to be the cause on account of the superimposition of that ajnAna (in Brahman).

Thus, the ignorance, which is the material cause of this cosmos, is accepted as the shakti in advaita VedAnta.

This ignorance is nitya, as nitya as sAkshI. As long as the sAkshI is present, avidyA remains present *ipso facto*. Because sAkshI is defined as avidyA-upahita-chaitanya vide BBV 1.4.372 - अज्ञानमात्रोपाधित्वादविद्यामुषितात्मभिः। कौटस्थ्यान्निर्द्वयोऽप्यात्मा साक्षीत्यध्यस्यते जडैः॥ Since the presence of sAkshI in deep sleep is admitted by BrihadAraNyaka Shruti vide 4.3.23, the presence of avidyA in deep sleep stands admitted *ipso facto*.

The ignorance is experienced by sAkshI in deep sleep just as it is experienced by sAkshI in waking. HOSS should explain as to which is the entity that experiences ignorance in waking.

Can it be pramAtA? No. PramA destroys avidyA and does not sustain it. It has to be sAkshI who experiences ignorance in waking. Since there is no loss of sAkshI in deep sleep, there is no incongruity in sAkshI experiencing ignorance in deep sleep.

Hence, the assertions made in HOSS are devoid of merit.

HOSS: But has it not been said that absence of experience in dreamless sleep is due to the absence of any manifesting factor (such as the mind in an active condition) and not to the absence of anything (such as positive Ignorance) to experience as an object? Certainly it has been said, but wrongly. There is nothing in dreamless sleep to decide whether absence of experience is due to absence of knowledge or to the absence of a manifesting factor (the mind being then in dissolution). And there is no manifesting factor present in dreamless sleep that would enable us to make such a decision. Our opponent's view is undermined simply by the presence of doubt. Nor is there any rule that a manifesting organ (such as the mind) is invariably necessary for the knowledge of anything. Sri Samkara has said, 'One cannot establish any universal rule that, whenever one thing has knowledge of another, there is also an instrument of knowledge that is different from either' (BrihadAraNyak BhAshya 4.3.7). Otherwise there could be no knowledge of the mind itself.

Answer: HOSS has not understood our position clearly. And hence, obviously, the discussion is misplaced. First of all, we do not say that there is absence of experience in deep sleep. The experience is definitely there in deep sleep. This experience is, however, not of pramAtA but of sAkshI. The absence of a manifesting factor is stated by us to only explain the reason as to why this experience of sAkshI in sushupti is not as vivid as the experience of sAkshI in waking. sAkshI witnesses ignorance in both waking and deep sleep. However, the experience of ignorance in waking is vivid on account of the presence of mind, whereas the experience of ignorance by sAkshI in deep sleep is not vivid on account of merger of mind in sushupti. Thus, HOSS has not understood our position clearly. We do not say that absence of mind is the reason for absence of experience in deep sleep. We say that absence of mind is the reason for non-vivid-ness of the

experience of sAkshI in deep sleep. Here, HOSS may need to refer to Naishkarmya Siddhi 3.58 which conclusively states that ignorance is present in deep sleep and its experience is not vivid on account of absence of manifesting factor.

HOSS has completely misunderstood our position and hence their objection is not at all worthy of consideration. However, a point has been made vide - **//And there is no manifesting factor present in dreamless sleep that would enable us to make such a decision. Our opponent's view is undermined simply by the presence of doubt. Nor is there any rule that a manifesting organ (such as the mind) is invariably necessary for the knowledge of anything.//**

There is certainly no manifesting factor present in deep sleep. But how is it known? This also is known by sAkshI. VArtika says in 4.3.192 - द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यांश्च यः स्वप्ने प्रसमीक्षते। तदभावं सुषुप्ते च स आत्मैत्यभ्युपेयताम्॥ Now, such a sAkshI being present in sushupti who witnesses the absence of mind, who can deny the presence of ignorance without which the sAkshI itself is undefined. Thus, there is no doubt in our view. The absence of mind is known conclusively by sAkshI in sushupti without any manifesting factor just as presence of mind is known conclusively by sAkshI in waking. The quote from BU 4.3.7 thus only supports our view.

Thus, again, HOSS has erred in understanding our view.

HOSS: Perhaps you will say that though the mind is by nature non-conscious, it is a transparent substance, so that it (is a special case in that it) does not require any other manifesting factor in order to be illumined by consciousness (since it is automatically illumined by a reflection of the Self) - whereas positive Ignorance (being non-transparent) does require to be illumined in order to be known. But this will not help. For a dark substance would not tolerate light at all, and the existence of such a thing could not be established even assuming the existence of a manifesting instrument. Nobody but a lunatic would go about searching for the darkness of night with a lamp. So this idea that Ignorance could be known through a manifesting factor (and so could be present in dreamless sleep

but unknown on account of the absence of a manifesting because of the dissolution of the mind) is mere idle fancy.

Answer: It is to state that there is complete lack of understanding of our view by the HOSS.

Both mind and ignorance are illumined by the chaitanya. That “mind is illumined by chaitanya” is accepted by HOSS. To show that ignorance also is always illumined by chaitanya, they should see BBV 4.3.355 आत्माज्ञानमतः प्रत्यक्चैतन्याभासवत्सदा। आत्मनः कारणत्वादेः प्रयोजकमिहेष्यते॥(4.3.355). Both ignorance and mind require the illumination of chaitanya to be known. There is no difference whatsoever. When mind and ignorance are both lit-up by the illumination of chaitanya, it is like two reflected-lights making the illumination more vivid. When only ignorance is lit-up, but mind is not on account of being merged, it is obvious that the experience will be less vivid. Remember, mind never appears without its cause, the ignorance whereas ignorance can pretty well appear without its effect, the mind.

HOSS states - **For a dark substance would not tolerate light at all, and the existence of such a thing could not be established even assuming the existence of a manifesting instrument. Nobody but a lunatic would go about searching for the darkness of night with a lamp.** - Alas, where all can non-understanding of fundamental concepts take one to! Nobody is searching for the darkness of night with a lamp. The illumination of chaitanya is not detrimental to the darkness which is ignorance. It is an illuminer of ignorance. Otherwise one would never know that he is ignorant. The avidyA (darkness) is known not by pramANa-vritti (lamp) which is the destroyer of avidyA (darkness). But by avidyA-vritti-pratibimbata-chaitanya which is a sustainer and enabler of avidyA. As stated before, the manifesting factor is responsible for vivid-ness of knowledge-of-experience and not to establish the existence of avidyA. The appearance of avidyA is certified by sAkshI in sushupti through avidyA-vritti just as it does so in waking. The vivid-ness of this certification is dependent on the presence or absence of a manifesting factor, the mind.

It is sad to see as to how the HOSS has failed to appreciate our primary and fundamental positions and gone on to do the nirAsa. One has to first understand the opponent to contradict him. That is the basic premise.

HOSS: Senseless also was the whole idea that the self-luminous Self could require another manifesting factor in order to experience a 'positive Ignorance' based in itself and free from any other obstructing factor. For a revealer derives its power to reveal from itself alone. Thus Shri Shankara says, '(The ear has the power to reveal its own special object, sound). But that power to reveal its own special object is only found because of the presence within all of Consciousness as the light of the Self, and would not be found if the latter were not present. So to speak of (the Self as) 'the hearer of hearing' was but right' (Kena Bh. 1.2, S.S>B. 1.209). And the absence of experience in dreamless sleep is not due to the absence of any instrument (i.e. the mind) to reveal positive Ignorance (as would be required on the theory that positive Ignorance was present in dreamless sleep, but that we were not aware of it for lack of of cognitive instrument).

Answer: Again, a continuance of disoriented appreciation of our position. First of all, self-luminous Self does **NOT** experience. It is the sAkshI which experiences. And that sAkshI is self-luminous-Self along with the upAdhi of ajnAna (BBV 1.4.372, supra). Further, this sAkshI does **NOT** need a manifesting factor to experience ignorance. It is self-capable. It experiences avidyA through avidyA-vritti. Both in waking as well as in sushupti. There is no intervention of mind. Please!! Remember it. The manifesting factor helps in the vivid-ness of the experience. Envy, jealousy, pot-ignorance are vividly known by sAkshI in waking on account of mind being present along with ignorance. But, avidyA is not similarly vividly known by sAkshI in sushupti owing to absence of mind. The experience by sAkshI is not dependent on the presence of a manifesting factor. The vividness of the experience of sAkshI is contingent on the presence of a manifesting factor.

HOSS: Perhaps you will then claim that there *is* experience in dreamless sleep. But even this will not help your cause. For dreamless sleep is natural for all living beings. If there were particular experience of any kind in it, that would imply that sleep has been broken. So the more reasonable view is that there is no experience in dreamless sleep of positive Ignorance as found described in the theory.

Answer: Sleep breaks only on account of activity of mind and not on account of activity of avidyA. Presence of only avidyA is deep sleep. This is defined so. Deep sleep is another name of avidyA (NS 4.43). As long as avidyA has not produced its effect, namely mind, sushupti is not broken. Experience by pramAtA is necessary as well as sufficient condition for breaking of sushupti. Experience by sAkshI does not break sushupti. So, the argument of HOSS is devoid of merit.

HOSS: Those who propound positive Ignorance speak of Ignorance as known by the witness-consciousness. And they claim that there is no particular experience in dreamless sleep, so that it cannot be broken (before definitive waking). No one on waking up from dreamless sleep has the feeling ‘During sleep I experienced (positive) Ignorance’. And the fact of positive Ignorance being witnessed in dreamless sleep is not universally recognized, and it cannot be shown that Ignorance is experienced there. Particular experience (of any kind) is not admitted for dreamless sleep and never could be. So the theory that positive ignorance is present in dreamless sleep is refuted by the fact that it is never experienced.

Answer: Again. Some basic inconsistencies. Anubhava is not non-jnAna. It is inconsistent to say that sAkshI knows ignorance but has no experience. Anubhava is a type of jnAna, the other type is smriti. For more clarity, refer to

<https://sudhanshushekhar.wordpress.com/2022/01/29/definitions/>

So, our claim is that ignorance is known by the sAkshI in sushupti just as it is known by sAkshI in waking. Also, the experience of sAkshI is that very knowledge itself. Because experience and knowledge are both chaitanya reflected in a vritti (here, in avidyA-vritti). Non-breaking of sleep is on account of non-transformation of ignorance in mind.

The experience of avidyA by sAkshI is demonstrated by the statement - I do not know. When asked - Do you know as to how does the Mount Everest look like - there is a spontaneous answer - No, I don't know. One does not know it by pramANa because pramANa is to remove ignorance. There are only two knowers, pramAtA and sAkshI. This knowledge - I do not know - springs from the experience of sAkshI. This sAkshI sustains avidyA, it is not the destroyer of avidyA.

I don't know the pot in your home. When I see it, I know it. Thus, the pot-ignorance is removed by the pramANa. But prior thereto, when I did not know the pot, i.e. when I had pot-ignorance, I knew this pot-ignorance. How? Not by pramAtA. But by sAkshI.

In all the pot-ignorance, cloth-ignorance, the noun ignorance is similarly witnessed by sAkshI. When pot-ignorance is witnessed by sAkshI, it is trite that ignorance is witnessed by sAkshI.

In Sambandha BhAshya VArtika verse 995, Sureshwara says - अत्यन्तानुभूतेषु हिमवत्पृष्ठवस्तुषु जाग्रतोऽनुभवोऽप्येवं सुषुप्तात्र विशिष्यते॥ The experience in waking state of those objects which are not at all experienced, such as the objects on the top of a mountain, is not at all different from sushupti. In verse 997, Sureshwara says - पुमान्सुप्तोत्थितोऽप्येवं प्रमात्रादि लयं स्वतः। अनुभूत्यैव सन्धत्ते नान्तराऽतोऽस्य लुप्तता॥ The waker, similarly, remembers from experience regarding the merger of pramAtA etc. **Hence, there is no absence of experience in sushupti.**

In nutshell, the experience "I don't know" itself is the proof of ignorance witnessed by sAkshI. There is a confusion only on account of tAdAtmya-adhyAsa of pramAtA and sAkshI. As explained by Sureshwara above, the experience of sushupti in this regard i.e. witnessing the ignorance is not at all different from that in waking. Ignorance is witnessed by sAkshI in both waking and dream. Its vividness is dependent on the presence of mind as explained in NS 3.58.